

better controlled? Are exposure limits too low or too high? What substances are most in need of regulation?

You can help the committee to decide what substances are of greatest concern and the regulations and exposure limits that would be acceptable.

### *Here Are Five Ways You Can Get Involved*



- work through your employer, trade association or union
- talk to Joint Steering Committee representatives
- contact your local Ministry of Labour office
- attend public meetings
- send written comments to the Joint Steering Committee

We all have a part to play.

To find out who your committee representative is, or for more information, please contact:

The Ontario Ministry of Labour  
Policy and Regulations Branch  
400 University Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1T7

(416) 965-8710

Long distance callers please call collect.

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400 University Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1T7

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Cette publication est également disponible en français.

# *It's a Tough Job But Somebody's Got To Do It...*

## **Regulating Hazardous Substances in the Workplace**



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- 2011



Ontario  
Ministry of  
Labour

Occupational  
Health and Safety  
Division



# *...and Labour and Management Together Can Do It*

**W**ITH BUSINESSES TODAY using thousands of different chemicals and introducing new ones every year, more and more Ontario workers are at risk of being exposed to hazardous substances in their workplaces – even in jobs not normally associated with chemicals.

These include a wide range of workplaces, large, and small – from heavy industry, mines and construction projects to public institutions such as hospitals and schools. Even small businesses such as dry cleaners and photofinishing labs make use of hazardous substances.

Workers can be exposed to hazardous substances in a number of ways: by breathing, through skin contact or by ingesting them in some form.

The Ontario Ministry of Labour, under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, already has some regulations setting exposure limits and special controls for very hazardous substances, such as asbestos, benzene and lead. These are called 'designated' substances. A regulation also exists to control exposure to over 600 hazardous substances.

But a lot more needs to be done.

## *Working Together*



To develop more and better regulations that are acceptable to everyone, the Ontario Ministry of Labour has created the Joint Steering Committee on Hazardous Substances in the Workplace representing employers, workers and government.

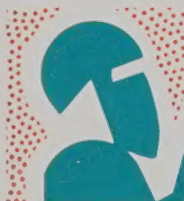
The committee is deciding the best way to regulate substances, including those already subject to regulation, and what these new regulations should cover. This way, regulations can be developed to reduce the risks to health and safety in all Ontario workplaces much more quickly and more effectively than in the past.

## *Who's on the Committee?*



A wide range of employers and labour unions concerned with hazardous substances in the workplace are represented on the committee. Made up of nine employer and nine labour group representatives, the committee is chaired by the head of the Ministry of Labour's Occupational Health and Safety Division.

## *What Does the Committee Do?*



Meetings are held monthly to discuss concerns and ideas from joint employer/labour groups and their members. The committee also looks at problems involved in setting standards and making regulations. Task forces – made up of employer, labour and government representatives – are appointed to direct studies and make recommendations to the committee.

Three task forces are already at work: one is developing an overall framework, or policy, for regulating hazardous substances; another is looking at the process used for setting exposure limits; and a third is studying the role of medical examinations and programs to monitor the health of workers.

## *How Does the New Regulation Process Work?*



The committee, after consulting with employer and labour groups, decides that a substance, or a group of substances, should be regulated. A task force is set up to study, and make recommendations on, what the new regulations should cover. When work is complete, the committee announces its intent to advise the Minister of Labour to regulate the substance, and draft regulations are prepared.

Draft regulations proposed by the committee will be subject to a number of reviews, including a 90-day period for written comments followed by public meetings and another 30-day period for more comments. Once all comments have been received and changes made, the final draft regulations will be sent to the Minister of Labour for cabinet approval.

## *Your Help Is Needed*



The committee needs everyone's participation – workers', unions', employers' and their associations' – to make the new process work and result in good regulations.

That's why the committee wants to hear your concerns, your ideas and your comments on hazardous substances in the workplace. Are there substances that need to be